

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 SAJ-01 NIC-01 ACDA-19 EB-12 COME-00

TRSE-00 CU-05 STR-08 FRB-03 OMB-01 SCI-06 XMB-07

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R 021610Z OCT 74

FM USMISSION BERLIN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BERLIN 1756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE, WB, US

SUBJECT: THE NASCENT US-EAST GERMAN RELATIONSHIP:
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS,
COINCIDENT WITH GDR'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF STATEHOOD,
PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE STOCK OF US-GDR
RELATIONSHIP. FOR GDR, US ACTION PROVIDES LONG-SOUGHT
STAMP OF LEGITIMACY AT A PROPITIOUS MOMENT; AT NEXT WEEKS'S
SILVER JUBILEE, GDR CAN PROCLAIM ITSELF A
UNIVERSALLY-RECOGNIZED, FULLY-SOVEREIGN NATION. BUT
EAST GERMANY'S SOVEREIGNTY REMAINS CIRCUMSCRIBED, FIRST
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BY REALITIES OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET UNION, AND

SECONDLY BY BERLIN SITUATION AND RETAINED ALLIED ACCESS RIGHTS THROUGH AND OVER GDR TERRITORY. THE FORMER MEANS GDR WOULD HAVE LIMITED FREEDOM TO MANEUVER IN SEEKING NEW POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH US, EVEN IF IT WERE SO DISPOSED; THE LATTER MEANS US AND ALLIES WILL CONTINUE TO SEEK TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH SOVIETS ON BERLIN ISSUES.

THERE ARE OTHER BRAKES ON PACE AT WHICH US-GDR RELATIONSHIP CAN DEVELOP. GDR LEADERSHIP, LONG ISOLATED FROM WEST AND STILL FORCED TO RELY ON WALL AND BARBED WIRE TO PREVENT MASS EXODUS OF POPULACE, WILL TEND TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF ANY PERCEIVED ATTEMPTS BY US TO ESTABLISH COUNTRY PROGRAMS AIMED AT UNDERMINING REGIME OR SEPARATING IT FROM ITS CITIZENRY. US FOR ITS PART WILL NOT FIND GDR IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE A PARTICULARLY INTERESTING NEGOTIATING PARTNER ON ISSUES THAT REALLY COUNT. MOSCOW WILL STILL SPEAK FOR THE EAST ON CRUCIAL MATTERS OF DETENTE AND TROOP DISPOSITIONS, WHILE FRG MUST REMAIN LEADING WESTERN NEGOTIATOR ON BROADER GERMAN ISSUES.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL HAVE LITTLE TO DISCUSS WITH GDR. EVEN THOUGH WE CAN NOT EASE THE AFFRONT TO EAST GERMAN DIGNITY REPRESENTED BY ALLIED PRESENCE IN BERLIN, OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE UP AND PURSUE A SERIOUS DIALOGUE WITH HONECKER AND COMPANY COULD SERVE TO LESSEN SENSE OF THREAT WHICH GDR FEELS FROM WEST BERLIN. TO EXTENT WE CAN DISPEL THEIR SUSPICIONS OF OUR MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS, GDR PRESSURES ON MOSCOW TO "DO SOMETHING" ABOUT BERLIN MAY BE LESSENER. END SUMMARY.

A. THE GDR AT TWENTY-FIVE

1. US AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, COMING ON EVE OF GDR'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY, PROMISES TO LEND ADDITIONAL LUSTRE TO OCTOBER 7 CELEBRATIONS. IGNORING A FEW HOLDOUTS SUCH AS CANADA, GDR IS ABLE TO POINT TO "UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION," ALONG WITH UN MEMBERSHIP, AS EVIDENCE THAT AT 25 IT HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE IN WORLD AS FULLY INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN NATION. LAST WEEK'S CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS HAVE PROVIDED INSTI-CONFIDENTIAL

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TUTIONAL REINFORCEMENT TO CLAIM THAT THE "GERMAN PROBLEM" HAS BEEN SOLVED THROUGH DISAPPEARANCE OF THE GERMAN NATION AND EXISTENCE OF TWO INDEPENDENT STATES, FOR WHICH THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER THOUGHT OF REUNIFICATION. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE GDR CITIZEN, HIS GOVERNMENT CAN JUSTIFIABLY POINT TO MODERNIZATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY ON A SCALE UNIMAGINABLE 25 YEARS AGO.

2. BUT AFTER THE GLITTER OF OCTOBER 7 FESTIVITIES FACES, PERENNIAL PROBLEMS WILL REMAIN. SO LONG AS IT HAS THE BACKING OF SOVIETS, THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT TO SURVIVAL OF GDR REGIME -- YET IT IS A REGIME FROM WHICH THE POPULACE REMAINS DISAFFECTED AND WHICH STILL MUST RELY ON COERCION AND POLICE STATE METHODS TO PREVENT WHOLESAL DEFLECTIONS. WIDE AREAS OF INEXPERIENCE AND A QUARTER CENTURY'S ISOLATION ARE BOUND TO HAVE PRODUCED UNCERTAINTY AND SUSPICION AS GDR EMERGES ON WORLD SCENE, TAKES UP ITS ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS AND BEGINS TO DEAL WITH UNFAMILIAR WESTERN DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN EAST BERLIN. ITS ECONOMIC FREEDOM OF CHOICE IS LIMITED BY GREATER NEEDS -- AND DEMANDS -- OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY AND CEMA INTEGRATION SCHEMES, AS WELL AS BY DANGERS WHICH IT PERCEIVES FROM WESTERN ECONOMIC PENETRATION.

3. MOST IMPORTANT, "SOVEREIGNTY" REMAINS A HALF TRUTH, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF SOVIET CONSTRAINTS, WHICH AFFECT ALL OF EASTERN EUROPE, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE SPECIAL REGIME IN BERLIN, ON THE ACCESS ROUTES, AND IN THE AIR CORRIDORS.

B. US INTERESTS IN GDR

4. VIEWED IN ABSTRACT, OUR INTERESTS IN GDR ARE CONSIDERABLE. INDEED, LACK OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS UP UNTIL NOW WITH GDR -- UNLIKE THE CASE OF ALBANIA, SAY, OR MONGOLIA -- HAS NOT MEANT THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT. EAST GERMAN CONSIDERATIONS HAVE LOOMED LARGE IN MANY OF THE MAJOR CRISES OF POST-WAR ERA, AND ALSO IN MOVEMENT TOWARD DETENTE OF RECENT PAST. WHERE OUR INTERESTS ARE GREATEST, OUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVING THEM THROUGH BILATERAL DEALINGS WITH GDR REMAIN LIMITED:

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USIA-15 IO-14 SAJ-01 NIC-01 ACDA-19 EB-12 COME-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 BERLIN 1756

--PRESTIGE AND SECURITY OF BOTH COUNTRIES ARE
INTERTWINED IN BERLIN. BUT BECAUSE OUR ABILITY TO UPHOLD
OUR COMMITMENT TO WEST BERLINERS WITHOUT CONFLICT DEPENDS
ULTIMATELY ON SOVIET ADHERENCE TO FOUR-POWER ARRANGEMENTS
AND AGREEMENTS, WE MUST CONTINUE EVEN AFTER ESTABLISHMENT
OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH USSR ON
BERLIN MATTERS.

--ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION AND PRESENCE OF LARGEST
CONCENTRATION OF SOVIET FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE IN GDR MEANS
THAT EVENTS THERE HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON OUR COMMITMENT
THROUGH NATO TO DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE. YET GDR'S
CONTRIBUTION TO EASTERN DECISION-MAKING ON QUESTIONS OF
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DETENTE AND TROOP DISPOSITIONS WILL REMAIN NEGLIGIBLE.

--US RETAINS RESPONSIBILITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE
"UNSOLVED GERMAN PROBLEM," OF WHICH FUTURE OF
GDR REMAINS A CRITICAL ELEMENT. BROADER GERMAN ISSUES
WILL, HOWEVER, FOR MOST PART BE HANDLED IN DIRECT
DEALINGS BETWEEN THE TWO GERMANIES, LEAVING LIMITED
ROOM FOR US INITIATIVES IN THIS AREA IN OUR DEALINGS
WITH GDR.

--RECENT ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH
MAKE GDR POTENTIALLY ATTRACTIVE AS A COMMERCIAL PARTNER.
BUT ITS ECONOMIC COMMITMENTS TO USSR AND CEMA, AS WELL
AS ITS GREATER INTEREST IN TRADE WITH FRG SO LONG AS
FAVORABLE CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS ARE AVAILABLE, PLACE FINITE
LIMITS ON TRADE POSSIBILITIES FOR US.

5. PRIMARY ISSUE FOR US, THEN, IS TO DEFINE THE USE THAT CAN BE MADE OF OUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GDR IN A WAY THAT WILL SERVE US INTERESTS.

C. PROSPECTS FOR US-GDR RELATIONS

6. BERLIN PROBLEM AND SPECIAL DEROGATION OF EAST GERMAN SOVEREIGNTY WHICH IT ENTAILS PROBABLY WILL REMAIN AN IRRITANT IN US-GDR RELATIONS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT LITTLE GOOD CAN COME OF THE NEW RELATIONSHIP. WESTERN PRESENCE IN BERLIN AND SPECIAL ACCESS RIGHTS ARE SEEN BY GDR AS BOTH INSULT AND THREAT. IT IS NOT ONLY THE INDIGNITY, BUT ALSO THE FEAR OF WEST BERLIN AS BASE FOR SUBVERSION OR AS SPEARHEAD FOR ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW REGIME IN EAST, THAT HAS IN PAST PROMPTED EAST GERMAN PRESSURES ON SOVIETS TO "DO SOMETHING" ABOUT BERLIN. SO LONG AS WE REFUSE TO TREAT WITH GDR ON BERLIN MATTERS -- AS WE MUST FOR THE INDEFINITE FUTURE -- THE INSULT WILL CONTINUE. SIMILARLY, WEST BERLIN ENCLAVE IN HEART OF GDR WILL ALWAYS BE DISRUPTIVE. EMIGRATION CONTROLS AND THE WALL -- INDEED, ALL ASPECTS OF GDR'S POLICY OF "ABGRENZUNG," (KEEPING ITSELF AT A DISTANCE FROM WEST GERMAN) WILL REMAIN.

7. NONETHELESS, OUR NEWLY-CREATED ABILITY TO ENGAGE GDR
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LEADERSHIP IN A DIALOGUE SHOULD ENABLE US TO LESSEN ITS SUSPICIONS AS TO OUR INTENTIONS AND THEREFORE ITS PERCEPTION OF A THREAT FROM WEST BERLIN. ADMITTEDLY, OUR BRITISH AND FRENCH ALLIES WHO HAVE PRECEDED US TO EAST BERLIN HAVE NOT BEEN OVERLY SUCCESSFUL IN THIS REGARD. YET PRESENCE OF A SKILLED AND EXPERIENCED AMERICAN AMBASSADOR OF STATURE PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE EAST GERMAN DECISION MAKERS TO REALITIES OF AMERICAN POLICIES AND MOTIVES. IN TIME, IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING ON PART OF REGIME IN EAST BERLIN -- PROVIDED IT IS NOT ACHIEVED AT EXPENSE OF SOVIET SUSPICION THAT WE ARE TRYING TO SPLIT GDR AWAY FROM MOSCOW -- COULD REMOVE SOME OF EXPLOSIVENESS FROM BERLIN SITUATION. SUCH UNDERSTANDING WOULD, HOPEFULLY, LESSEN SENSE OF URGENCY WHICH EAST GERMANS ATTACH TO "SOLVING" BERLIN PROBLEM.

8. OPENING OF EMBASSY ALSO PROVIDES OPPORTUNITES FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS IN CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS, THOUGH HERE, AS IN POLITICAL AREA, PROGRESS AT BEST PROBABLY WILL BE SLOW. IF AS POSTULATED ABOVE THE MAJOR PROMISE FOR SERVING LONG-RANGE US INTERESTS LIES IN ALLAYING FEARS AND SUSPICIONS OF GDR LADERSHIP, OUR CULTURAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICIES, IN PARTICULAR, SHOULD BE FORMULATED WITH THAT AIM IN MIND. MODEST PROGRAMS AIMED AT PRESENTING

MORE BALANCED PICTURE OF US SOCIETY, IN ORDER TO DISPEL
EFFECTS OF LONG FIXATION ON US ILLS AND TROUBLES, WOULD
BE DESIRABLE. ANY ATTEMPT TO INSTITUTE ABRUPTLY COMPREHENSIVE
EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH COUNTRY NOT QUITE USED TO CONTACTS WITH
WEST WOULD ONLY SERVE TO HEIGHTEN SUSPICIONS OF REGIME AS
TO OUR REAL INTENT; INFLUENCING POPULACE IS IN ANY CASE
OF DUBIOUS VALUE IN SOCIETY WHERE POPULAR OPINION HAS
LITTLE OR NO IMPACT ON OFFICIAL POLICY. REALISM WE
HAVE SHOWN IN APPROACH TO BASKET III ISSUES IN CSCE
SHOULD THUS SERVE US IN GOOD STEAD AS WE INITIATE
CULTURAL CONTACTS WITH GDR.

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9. IN ECONOMIC FIELD, THERE SHOULD BE RELATIVELY GREATER
HOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TIES, GIVEN INDICATIONS THAT GDR

VIEWS US AS IMPORTANT AND UNIQUE SOURCE OF ADVANCED PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY. AMERICAN INDUSTRY, AT SAME TIME, HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN ENTERING THE EAST GERMAN MARKET. WITH LOW STARTING POINT (\$38.5 MILLION IN 1973) IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT BILATERAL TRADE STATISTICS WILL BEGIN TO REFLECT A RESPECTABLE INCREASE, AT LEAST IN PERCENTAGE TERMS. ACTUAL VOLUME IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SMALL FOR SOME TIME, BECAUSE OF GDR'S LIMITED ABILITY TO MODIFY ITS TRADE PATTERN. SOME 65 O/O OF GDR TRADE IS COMMITTED TO USSR AND CEMA, AND ANOTHER 10 O/O WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO GO TO THE FRG, IF AS NOW SEEMS

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LIKELY SWING AGREEMENT IS EXTENDED AFTER 1975. THE JAPANESE EXPERIENCE MAY BE INSTRUCTIVE. AFTER A YEAR OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BILATERAL TRADE REMAINS AT ABOUT \$50 MILLION -- CONSIDERING INFLATION, AN ACTUAL DECREASE IN VOLUME.

10. FORTHCOMING VISIT TO US OF A SENIOR TRADE OFFICIAL WILL GIVE EAST GERMANS THEIR FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SOUND US OUT ON LONG-TERM TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS AND ON MATTERS SUCH AS MFN (TO WHICH GDR ATTACHES BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE) AND EXIM BANK FACILITIES. THESE TALKS SHOULD AT LEAST GIVE US A BETTER APPRECIATION OF PROSPECTS FOR MEANINGFUL TRADE INCREASE.

D. CONCLUSION

11. AS WE APPROACH ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, OUR CHOICE OF OPERATING METHODS WILL LARGELY DEPEND ON OUR OBJECTIVES. IF WE ATTEMPT TO WEAN THE GDR AWAY FROM MOSCOW'S ABSOLUTE CONTROL, WE ARE DESTINED TO HAVE SUBSTANTIAL DIFFICULTY. QUITE APART FROM SOVIET ALERTNESS TO ANY SUCH EFFORTS, AMBIVALENCE OF GDR LEADERSHIP ITSELF WOULD SERVE TO THWART US. WHILE INTERESTED IN GREATER INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION, SED IS AT SAME TIME BESET BY INSECURITY AND FEARS OF CONSEQUENCES OF LESS THAN TOTAL SOVIET SUPPORT. ON OTHER HAND, IF WE START FROM SUPPOSITION THAT GDR BECAUSE OF ITS TOTAL SUSERVIENCE TO MOSCOW IS OF NO INTEREST AS A NEGOTIATING PARTNER WOULD ALSO BE MISTAKE. IT IS TRUE THAT MOSCOW WILL CONTINUE TO CALL THE SHOTS, BUT HISTORICAL RECORD SUPPORTS THESIS THAT AT LEAST SOME OF EARLIER SOVIET ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS BERLIN WERE TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO EAST GERMAN PRESSURES, BECAUSE WE WILL BE UNWILLING TO ABANDON WEST BERLIN, WE WILL NEVER TOTALLY ELIMINATE THOSE PRESSURES. BUT TO EXTENT WE CAN USE OUR NEW RELATIONSHIP TO GIVE GDR LEADERSHIP A MORE REALISTIC

UNDERSTANDING OF US POLICIES -- INCLUDING BOTH THE
FIRMNESS OF OUR COMMITMENT TO BERLIN AND THE NON-THREATENING
PURPOSE OF OUR PRESENCE THERE-- WE MAY SERVE IF NOT TO
PREVENT AT LEAST TO LESSEN THE INTENSITY OF FUTURE
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BERLIN01756
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740278-0720
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741081/aaaacqyv.tel
Line Count: 396
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <03 JUL 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE NASCENT US-EAST GERMAN RELATIONSHIP: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GC, WB, US, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005